EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A GRAVE IN A CEMETERY:

GRAVEDIGGER

(V.O.) My name is Paul Smokeler. But according to the nametag on my suit, my name is Gravedigger.

THE CAMERA STARTS TO SLOWLY DOLLY TOWARD THE GRAVE.

PAUL

(V.O.) I've been a gravedigger at this particular cemetery for four years. I've dug 117 graves, moved half a ton of Earth, and have never once complained. Day by day, nothing ever changes...this day was different.

By this time we are looking into the hole that Paul is digging. He is wearing HEADPHONES while he digs.

PAN UP:

A man stands over the hole, watching Paul.

Paul doesn't notice him. He keeps digging.

The man leans down and grabs Paul's shoulder.

MAN Hi there...

III CHELE...

This scares Paul. He removes his headphones and backs up against the side of the grave.

PAUL Who are you?

MAN That really isn't important, but if it makes you feel better, you can call me Bob.

PAUL Well, OK. What do you want Bob?

BOB Well, I'm looking for a man named Paul Smokeler.

PAUL

(confused) How'd you know my name?

BOB

I know a lot about you Mr. Smokeler. I know that you graduated high school five years ago, I know your parents died four and a half years ago,I know you haven't done anything with your life since, and now you get paid to dig holes for dead people.

PAUL

I think you'd better leave...

BOB

Wait, I haven't told you why I'm here. I'm here, Mr. Smokeler, to offer you something that could turn your life around. It could get you out of that jumpsuit and out of this hole. You'd never have to touch a shovel again.

Paul doesn't say anything, but is listening.

Bob, realizing he has Paul's attention, continues...

BOB

Alright...Now, Paul, I know that the grave you are digging right now is for a women named Loretta Card. Loretta died two days ago from cancer.

BOB

(cont'd) Loretta will be buried in this hole in two days during a small ceremony with just members of her immediate family. I also know that after the funeral is all over and the people all go home to dry their eyes, you are the one that has the responsibility of covering up the casket. That's where my interesting

PAUL

I'm still listening.

offer comes in.

Bob starts to walk around the hole, circling Paul.

BOB

You, Paul, are the last to interact with the dead before forever putting them in their eternal resting place. If you decided to...I don't know...open the coffin and do anything, I bet no one would even notice. Hell, you might already do it. For all I know you could have a stack of body parts in your crappy apartment on Fifth Street.

PAUL That's disgusting. You need to leave!

Paul starts to climb out of the hole. Bob kicks Paul back down into the hole. Paul falls onto his back.

BOB

(With more intensity) I know for a fact that Loretta will be buried wearing all of her personal jewelry. She was a women who loved her jewelry. She had two diamond rings, a pure gold anklet, a blue sapphire bracelet, and a diamond necklace in the shape of a heart made during World War II in Nazi-Occupied Germany. All together Loretta will be buried wearing over 1.5 million dollars of jewelry.

Paul has settled and is listening intently.

BOB Now, here is my proposition. You are to open up the casket when everyone leaves, remove all her jewelry, place them in this bag...

Bob pulls a velvet jewelry bag out of his pocket.

BOB ...and then put it in that tree over there. The next day there'll be \$150,000 in the same place. You can have it and do whatever you want. It's all yours. So, now....what do we say?

After the question we zoom in close on Paul's face as he contemplates the offer.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - TWO DAYS LATER

We look at the grave from several feet away. The funeral has happened and Paul if in the grave retrieving the jewelry.

WE DOLLY IN ON THE GRAVE AS PAUL TALKS:

PAUL (V.O.) I had a great respect for the dead. Being around them for as long as I had been made me that way, I guess. I never once looked in a casket afterward, never once even touched one. I wanted them to rest in peace. What I was doing was strictly for the money. My life is a wreck. I'd do just about anything to change it. And today a man named Bob is giving me a chance to do that.

Paul climbs out of the grave. He stands up and closes the velvet jewelry bag.

EXT. CEMETERY-TREE - DAY

Paul walks over the the tree that Bob designated for the swap. The tree has a big hole in it. Paul places the bag in the hole.

((Paul or the audience don't notice, but Loretta is standing in the background, watching Paul.))

He starts to walk away, but hesitates. He looks back at the tree...

... then to the grave. He feels weary about the plan.

Paul walks away, head down.

((Loretta follows))

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul walks into his crappy apartment carrying a brief case.

He walks in and sits on the couch, placing the case on the table in front of it.

Paul's RED PHONE rings. He gets up and answers it.

PAUL

Hello?

Static is all that comes through the receiver. Paul hangs up. He walks back to the couch.

Paul pops the locks on the brief case and opens it up. We see the \$150,000 that Bob promised him. A reluctantly happy expression fills Paul's face.

LOW ANGLE OF THE BRIEFCASE AS PAUL CLOSES IT:

Loretta is revealed as the case closes. She stands emotionless staring at Paul.

Paul looks up and sees her. He flinches in fright.

PAUL Who are you!?

Loretta stares at him.

CLOSE UP: LORETTA'S RING FINGER, LORETTA'S ANKLE, LORETTA'S EMPTY HAND, LORETTA'S CHEST.

All of her jewelry is missing and she wants it back.

We see a master shot of the room with Loretta on one side and Paul on the other. Loretta takes a step forward...

SLAM TO BLACK:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - LORETTA'S GRAVE

From a long distance away we see Loretta's grave. We slowly fade in closer.

PAUL (V.O.) The dead are merciless. They show zero compassion, zero remorse, and zero leniency to those who have scorned them. Loretta Card got her revenge. She was disturbed, interrupted, while in her eternal resting place and made those responsible pay. I learned my lesson...but will never get a second chance. We zoom up close to show Paul, lying dead. Blood drips from his nose.

FADE TO BLACK: